



ALABASTER
GUIDED MEDITATIONS

PSALMS

READ | REFLECT | RESPOND | REST

VOLUME ONE



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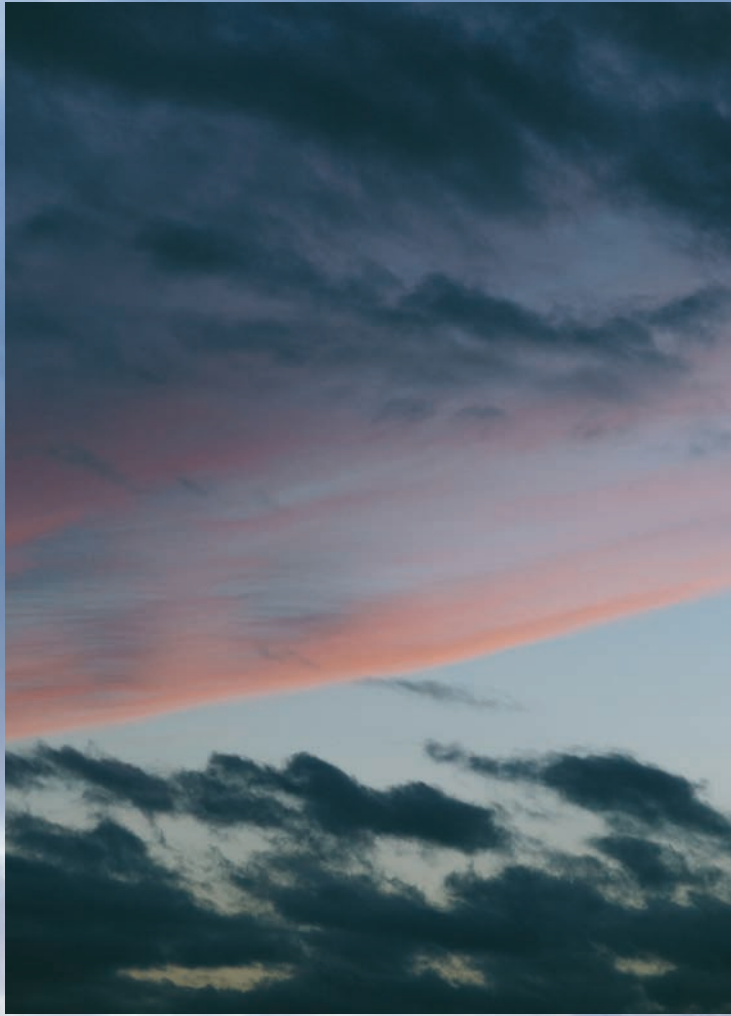
For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. He sang:

- ¹ I love you, LORD;
you are my strength.
- ² The LORD is my rock,
my fortress, and my savior;
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.
- ³ I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.
- ⁴ The ropes of death entangled me;
floods of destruction swept over me.
- ⁵ The grave wrapped its ropes around me;
death laid a trap in my path.
- ⁶ But in my distress I cried out to the LORD;
yes, I prayed to my God for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry to him reached his ears.
- ⁷ Then the earth quaked and trembled.
The foundations of the mountains shook;
they quaked because of his anger.
- ⁸ Smoke poured from his nostrils;
fierce flames leaped from his mouth.
Glowing coals blazed forth from him.
- ⁹ He opened the heavens and came down;
dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.
- ¹⁰ Mounted on a mighty angelic being, he flew,
soaring on the wings of the wind.
- ¹¹ He shrouded himself in darkness,
veiling his approach with dark rain clouds.
- ¹² Thick clouds shielded the brightness around him
and rained down hail and burning coals.
- ¹³ The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded
amid the hail and burning coals.
- ¹⁴ He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies;
great bolts of lightning flashed,
and they were confused.
- ¹⁵ Then at your command, O LORD,
at the blast of your breath,
the bottom of the sea could be seen,
and the foundations of the earth were laid bare.
- ¹⁶ He reached down from heaven and rescued me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
- ¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemies,
from those who hated me
and were too strong for me.
- ¹⁸ They attacked me at a moment
when I was in distress,
but the LORD supported me.
- ¹⁹ He led me to a place of safety;
he rescued me because he delights in me.
- ²⁰ The LORD rewarded me for doing right;
he restored me because of my innocence.
- ²¹ For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I have not turned from my God to follow evil.
- ²² I have followed all his regulations;
I have never abandoned his decrees.
- ²³ I am blameless before God;
I have kept myself from sin.
- ²⁴ The LORD rewarded me for doing right.



He has seen my innocence.
²⁵ To the faithful you show yourself faithful;
to those with integrity you show integrity.
²⁶ To the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.
²⁷ You rescue the humble,
but you humiliate the proud.
²⁸ You light a lamp for me.
The LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.
²⁹ In your strength I can crush an army;
with my God I can scale any wall.
³⁰ God's way is perfect.
All the LORD's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who
look to him for protection.
³¹ For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God is a solid rock?
³² God arms me with strength,
and he makes my way perfect.
³³ He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain heights.
³⁴ He trains my hands for battle;
he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.
³⁵ You have given me your shield of victory.
Your right hand supports me;
your help has made me great.
³⁶ You have made a wide path for my feet
to keep them from slipping.
³⁷ I chased my enemies and caught them;
I did not stop until they were conquered.
³⁸ I struck them down so they could not get up;
they fell beneath my feet.

³⁹ You have armed me with strength for the battle;
you have subdued my enemies under my feet.
⁴⁰ You placed my foot on their necks.
I have destroyed all who hated me.
⁴¹ They called for help,
but no one came to their rescue.
They even cried to the LORD,
but he refused to answer.
⁴² I ground them as fine as dust in the wind.
I swept them into the gutter like dirt.
⁴³ You gave me victory over my accusers.
You appointed me ruler over nations;
people I don't even know now serve me.
⁴⁴ As soon as they hear of me, they submit;
foreign nations cringe before me.
⁴⁵ They all lose their courage
and come trembling from their strongholds.
⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise to my Rock!
May the God of my salvation be exalted!
⁴⁷ He is the God who
pays back those who harm me;
he subdues the nations under me
⁴⁸ and rescues me from my enemies.
You hold me safe beyond
the reach of my enemies;
you save me from violent opponents.
⁴⁹ For this, O LORD,
I will praise you among the nations;
I will sing praises to your name.
⁵⁰ You give great victories to your king;
you show unfailing love to your anointed,
to David and all his descendants forever.



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For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- ¹ The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship.
- ² Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.
- ³ They speak without a sound or word;
their voice is never heard.
- ⁴ Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,
and their words to all the world.
God has made a home in the heavens for the sun.
- ⁵ It bursts forth like a radiant
bridegroom after his wedding.
It rejoices like a great athlete eager to run the race.
- ⁶ The sun rises at one end of the heavens
and follows its course to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.
- ⁷ The instructions of the LORD are perfect,
reviving the soul.
The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
- ⁸ The commandments of the LORD are right,
bringing joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are clear,
giving insight for living.
- ⁹ Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever.
The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair.
- ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold,
even the finest gold.
They are sweeter than honey,
even honey dripping from the comb.
- ¹¹ They are a warning to your servant,
a great reward for those who obey them.
- ¹² How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?
Cleanse me from these hidden faults.

- ¹³ Keep your servant from deliberate sins!
Don't let them control me.
Then I will be free of guilt
and innocent of great sin.
- ¹⁴ May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

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For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- ¹ In times of trouble, may the LORD answer your cry.
May the name of the God of Jacob
keep you safe from all harm.
- ² May he send you help from his sanctuary
and strengthen you from Jerusalem.
- ³ May he remember all your gifts
and look favorably on your burnt offerings.
- Interlude*
- ⁴ May he grant your heart's desires
and make all your plans succeed.
- ⁵ May we shout for joy when
we hear of your victory
and raise a victory banner in the name of our God.
May the LORD answer all your prayers.
- ⁶ Now I know that the LORD rescues his anointed king.
He will answer him from his holy heaven
and rescue him by his great power.
- ⁷ Some nations boast of their chariots and horses,
but we boast in the name of the LORD our God.
- ⁸ Those nations will fall down and collapse,
but we will rise up and stand firm.
- ⁹ Give victory to our king, O LORD!
Answer our cry for help.

RECOGNIZING GOD

PSALM 19:1-6

READ

1. Read Psalm 19:1-6.
2. Look at the image on page 32.
3. If you are near a window, look outside.

REFLECT

1. Read the passage again. Notice the references to nature and creation.
2. Look again at the image.
3. Notice how the smaller photograph repeats the theme of sky, its borders distinct but also creating physically another layer to the sky.
4. How do your current surroundings proclaim the glory of God? Now think back to what you saw outside. How does what you saw also proclaim the glory of God, expanding how you can experience God while also maintaining distinctions?
5. How can our different words of praise mimic creation in its proclamation of God's glory?
6. Read the passage again. Notice the references to humankind.
7. Describe a bridegroom and imagine him in your mind. Holding that image, describe an athlete and imagine her in your mind.

8. How does the diversity of creation reflect God? How does the diversity of human experiences reflect God? Why do we need this?

RESPOND

1. Look again at the image.
2. Read the passage again.
3. Close your eyes and name out loud, if possible, the ways you see God in your surroundings.
4. In your mind's eye, imagine you are staring at yourself in a mirror. Name out loud, if possible, the way you, your body, your culture, and your experiences proclaim the glory of God.
5. Imagine a friend who does not look like you or doesn't share your culture and name out loud, if possible, the way they proclaim the glory of God.

REST

1. Read the passage again.
2. If you are able, go outside or look out a window and take in the view, recognizing God's glory.